

Chairman John McCain
Opening Statement, Nominations of General Selva and General McDew
Tuesday, July 14

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to consider the nominations of General Paul Selva to be the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General Darren McDew to be Commander of U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM). We welcome you here this morning, as well as members of the Selva and McDew families. As is our tradition, at the beginning of your testimony we welcome each of you to introduce the members of your family joining you this morning. We know the sacrifices your families make, and we are grateful to them for their continued support to our nation.

General Selva and General McDew, you come before this Committee today amid a sweeping transition in military leadership that will take place over the coming months. In addition to your nominations, this Committee is currently considering the nominations of a new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, new service chiefs for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, and potentially others in the near future. This team of military leaders will be soon be responsible for preparing our military to confront the most diverse and complex array of global crises since the end of World War II.

The list of challenges for our national security is as daunting as it is drearily familiar. The rampage of ISIL's terrorist army, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and support for its destabilizing proxies, revisionist Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and China's continued military build-up and aggressive behavior towards its neighbors.

And yet, while worldwide challenges like these grow, the Defense Department has grown larger but less capable, more complex but less innovative, more proficient at defeating low-tech adversaries but more vulnerable to high-tech ones. And worse, the self-inflicted wounds of the Budget Control Act and sequestration-level defense spending have made all of these problems worse.

Over the past four years, we have seen drastic reductions to defense spending that have cut Army and Marine Corps end-strength dangerously low and slowed critical modernization priorities across the services, placing at risk our nation's military technological superiority. At the same time, our military has maintained an accelerated operational tempo and, as a consequence, entered a dangerous downward spiral of military capacity and readiness that risks compromising each

service's ability to execute our Defense Strategic Guidance at a time of accumulating danger to our national security.

The current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has stated that, even if the Defense Department receives the additional \$38 billion above the budget caps that the President's defense budget request, our military would still, quote, "remain at the *lower ragged edge of manageable risk* in our ability to execute the defense strategy." More worrisome, every one of our military service chiefs has testified that continued sequestration-level defense spending puts American lives at greater risk. Unless we change course and return to strategy-driven defense budgets, I fear our military will confront depleted readiness, chronic modernization problems, and deteriorating morale.

No matter how many dollars we spend, we won't be able to provide our military the equipment they need with a broken defense acquisition system that takes too long and costs too much. For example, an Army study looked at the time it would take to go through all of the AT&L reviews and buy nothing. What was the answer? Ten years. Ten years to buy nothing. Our adversaries are not shuffling paper. They are building weapon systems. And it's time for us to do the same.

General Selva, if confirmed as the next Vice Chairman, in addition to your many responsibilities supporting the next Chairman, you would serve as the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council and an executive member of the Defense Acquisition Board. In this combination of roles, you will have a critical role in the defense acquisition system, from identifying and approving joint requirements to assessing cost, schedule, and performance.

Members of this Committee will be very interested to hear your thoughts on acquisition reform. In particular, we will be interested to hear your views on how we fix blurred lines of accountability inside the defense acquisition system that allow its leaders to evade responsibility for results. This is the central problem this Committee is trying to address in the acquisition reforms adopted in the Senate's defense authorization bill. There are diverse views on acquisition reform, but one thing is for sure: the status quo is unacceptable. And we need a Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who recognizes that.

General McDew, as the commander of Air Mobility Command, you are well aware of the challenges facing TRANSCOM in projecting and sustaining forces around the world amid ongoing budget cuts. But TRANSCOM isn't just providing

capability to support other commands in confronting escalating global threats. Some of these threats are aimed at TRANSCOM itself.

For example, just last year this Committee conducted an exhaustive investigation of the cyber threats facing TRANSCOM. The report documented at least 20 advanced cyber intrusions targeting TRANSCOM contractors, all attributed to China. That's because according to the Pentagon, Chinese military analysts have identified logistics and mobilization as potential U.S. vulnerabilities, and their military doctrine advocates targeting these networks to impact our ability to operate during the early stages of conflict.

Given TRANSCOM's dependence upon the private sector, and the fact that the vast majority of their business is conducted on unclassified networks, there is still important work left to be done to enhance the Defense Department's ability to share information with its critical transportation contractors and assist them in detecting and mitigating cyberattacks.

General Selva, General McDew, we thank you both for appearing before us today. We look forward to your testimony.